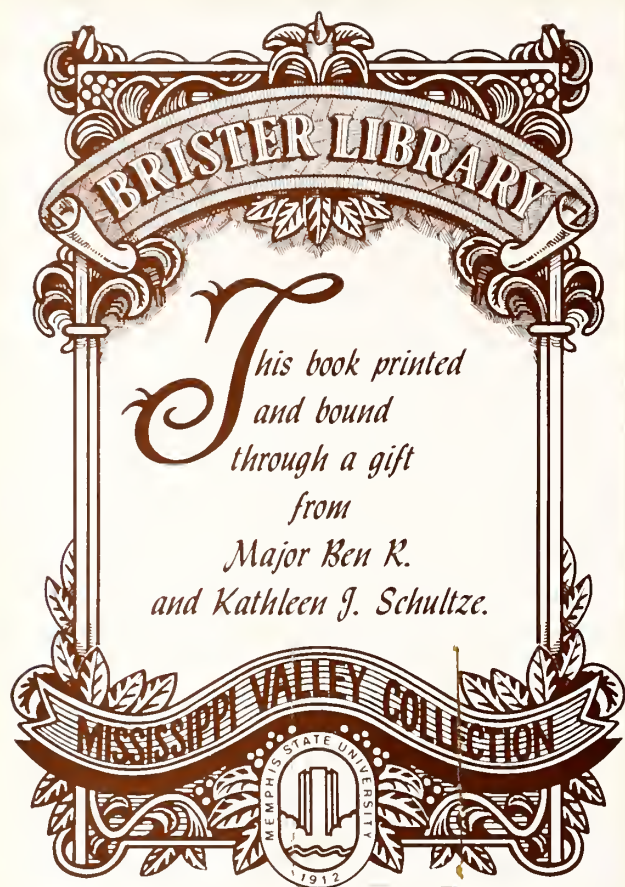


MEMPHIS BLACK HISTORY
INTERVIEW WITH
MR. MILTON HAMPTON

BY - CHARLES W. CRAWFORD
TRANSCRIBER - YVONNE PHILLIPS
ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH OFFICE
MEMPHIS STATE UNIVERSITY



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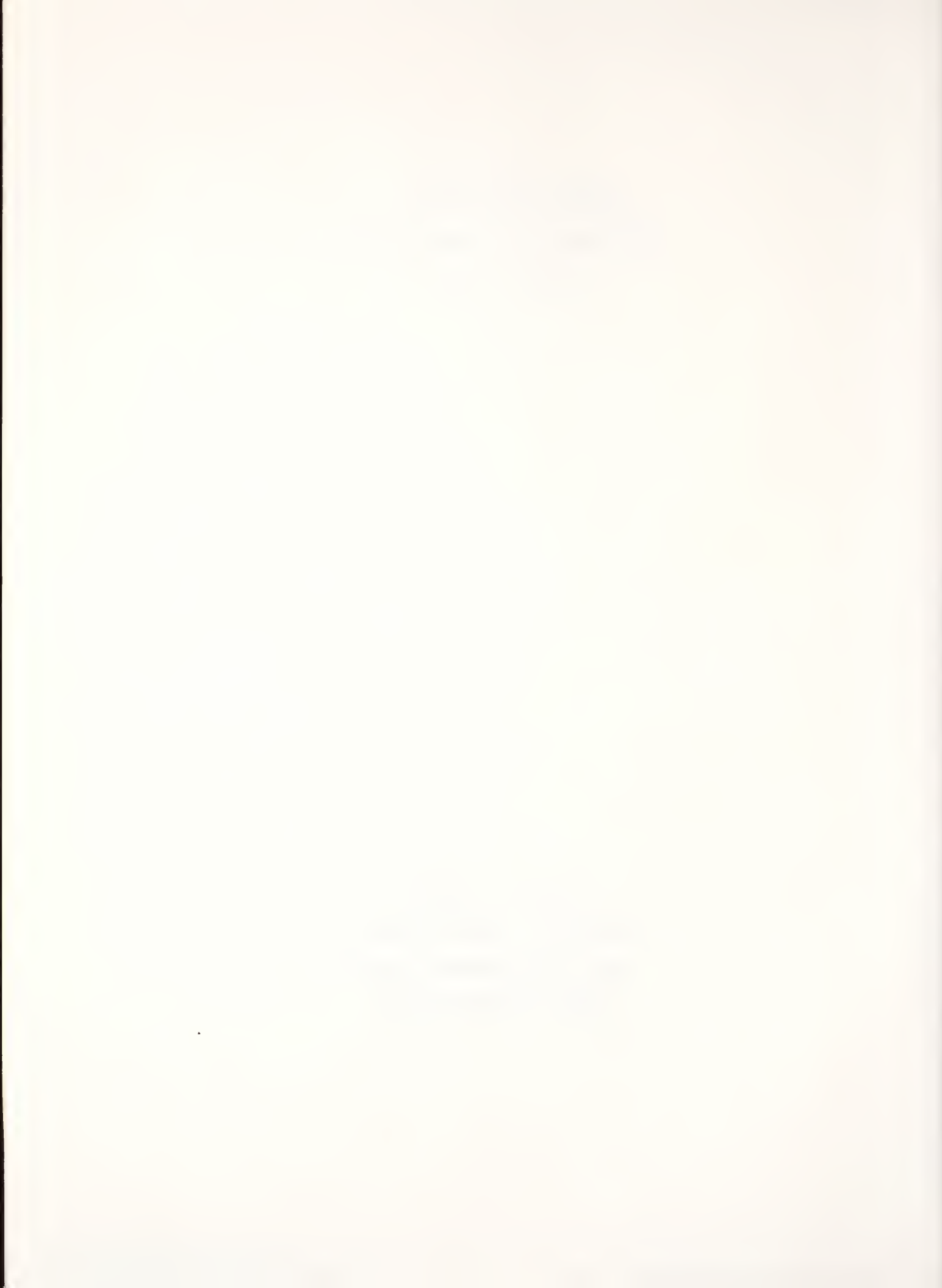
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INTERVIEW WITH MR. MILTON HAMPTON
OCTOBER 4, 1988

BY
CHARLES W. CRAWFORD
TRANSCRIBER: YVONNE PHILLIPS
ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH OFFICE
MEMPHIS STATE UNIVERSITY



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PLACE Memphis, Tennessee

DATE October 4, 1985

Milton Hampton

(INTERVIEWEE)

Charles W. Crawford

(For the Mississippi Valley Archives
of the John Willard Brister Library
of Memphis State University)



THIS IS THE ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH OFFICE OF MEMPHIS STATE UNIVERSITY.
THE PROJECT IS "MEMPHIS BLACK HISTORY". THE INTERVIEW IS WITH MR.
MILTON HAMPTON. THE DATE IS OCTOBER 4, 1985. THE PLACE IS MEMPHIS,
TENNESSEE. THE INTERVIEW IS BY DR. CHARLES W. CRAWFORD, DIRECTOR OF
THE MEMPHIS STATE UNIVERSITY ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH OFFICE. TRANSCRIBED
BY YVONNE PHILLIPS.

DR. CRAWFORD: Let me ask when and where you were born. And when
you came to Memphis. And then we'll get into the
other things you remember.

MR. HAMPTON: My name is Milton Hampton. I was born in New
Orleans, Louisiana June 30, 1920. And, my grandfather
was a Methodist preacher. He got sick in Arkansas and my father brought the
family through Arkansas and picked him up and brought him to Memphis. And
during the time, I made five years old and I started to school in Memphis.

DR. CRAWFORD: You came to Memphis when you were five years old?

MR. HAMPTON: About three years old.

DR. CRAWFORD: You came about 1923, then.

MR. HAMPTON: That's right.

DR. CRAWFORD: That was more than sixty years ago.

MR. HAMPTON: All right. I'm sixty-five now. We lived on Kerr Street
then until my father died. We took roots here and
moved to 1299 South Bellevue and I started school at five years old at Greenwood
Grammar School. Greenwood is no more now. But then from six to thirteen, I
was in grammar school and at thirteen I graduated from Greenwood and started
to Booker T. Washington.

DR. CRAWFORD: You got your Greenwood diploma, I believe, in 1933?

MR. HAMPTON: That's right. That's it right there. And during the time, at Bellevue Park. I lived at 1299 South Bellevue, which is across from Bellevue Park at the time, it was segregated.

DR. CRAWFORD: Bellevue Park was?

MR. HAMPTON: It was actually segregated and Negroes could not walk across it at that time. To get to Wilson Street, off Bellevue, we had to walk all the way to Parkway to go around it; much less play in it.

DR. CRAWFORD: I guess the whole park system was segregated.

MR. HAMPTON: It was. As the school system [was] and everything. And during one incident, I was walking across it and surrounded by a bunch of white youth and I had one white friend, who ran interference for me to get me out of the bunch and I made it to Wilson Street.

DR. CRAWFORD: Do you remember who that friend was?

MR. HAMPTON: I think his name was Davis, Bill Davis. I spent the rest of my grammar school days on Bellevue. And then when I started to Booker T. Washington, my father moved to 714 Mississippi, across the street from Booker Washington High School on Mississippi.

DR. CRAWFORD: That was convenient. You didn't have far to walk.

MR. HAMPTON: Afterwards, I did work after finishing high school in '37.

DR. CRAWFORD: You graduated...Let's see you got your diploma...?

MR. HAMPTON: 1937.

DR. CRAWFORD: Now, who were the teachers you remember best?

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1900-1901

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MR. HAMPTON: (Looking at pictures) I've got all the teachers.
[Here's] the class of '37. The principal, Rev.

Blair T. Hunt.

DR. CRAWFORD: Well, Blair T. Hunt. We have him on tape. Do you know that?

MR. HAMPTON: That was his first year of taking over.

DR. CRAWFORD: Uh-huh.

MR. HAMPTON: Nat D. Williams. Now these were the class sponsors when in 1937, we had--- no, 1977--we had a reunion, a forty year reunion.

DR. CRAWFORD: And that's the program for the reunion. I believe Dr. Hunt was living then, wasn't he?

MR. HAMPTON: Yes, he was. He spoke at the meeting. I have a picture of some of the class. Here is Raymond Hooks. He's my best friend. He's Benjamin Hooks' brother (head of NAACP). And so we played together. We're good friends now. And we played at Church Park. We were on the championship ball team then.

DR. CRAWFORD: Who sponsored that team? Did the Park Commission?

MR. HAMPTON: The Park Commission was in charge of Church Park at that time.

DR. CRAWFORD: They had a ball field at the park?

MR. HAMPTON: They had a ball field. We had volley ball. It was small, but we played such teams as Qualls, which were bigger and older boys and sponsored by Quall's Undertaking Company. But, we being grammar school boys, we'd play them and hit the ball in the trees in left field because

we couldn't hit the ball as hard as they could. But we could hit the left field on them. So Raymond and I and the team got to be champions of the Park Commission during that year.

DR. CRAWFORD: You won the championship that year?

MR. HAMPTON: We did win...volley ball...most everything.

DR. CRAWFORD: Was the auditorium still in Church Park then?

MR. HAMPTON: The auditorium was there. Church Park Auditorium was a place where during the time they had bands came there such as Chick Webb. I saw Chick Webb, Ella Fitzgerald, Jimmy Lunsford, who married a Miss Tulley, who was one of Booker Washington's teachers.

DR. CRAWFORD: Can you tell me what the park looked like then? The Church Park. You know we are trying to do something with it this year.

MR. HAMPTON: Next to it was the Elks Club. It fronted on Beale Street. It took the whole front and you went in the gate at the side of the park.

DR. CRAWFORD: Was that Fourth?

MR. HAMPTON: From Beale Street. The park was behind the auditorium. The auditorium was big enough to accommodate dances for big bands, big stage and so forth. In the back you had trees and enough for tennis court, volley ball, paddle tennis and a small softball diamond. That's what I was talking about. The trees were in left field so to us little guys, the advantage was like pulling the fence in.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did they still have flowers or walkways in there then?

MR. HAMPTON: Now Church Park is bare. They had just trees and it

was mostly undeveloped...No. I think a concrete cover goes across there. If I'm not mistaken a hot water bayou ran under there or something. It was so many people and see, children went to parks then. They don't usually go as much as they did then. And we played enough to keep the grass down. It was a really small park.

DR. CRAWFORD: Was First Baptist Beale Street.....?

MR. HAMPTON: First Baptist Beale is still there now.

DR. CRAWFORD: At the corner.

MR. HAMPTON: It's right there at the corner. It's not on the corner of Fourth Street. But it's next to the park. The park now has a sign sitting in front of it about Robert Church, who founded the park. You might want to go down and take a picture of it. The sign says that he was the first Negro millionaire here. It's on that sign. And that's the connection I had with Raymond Hooks and his little brother. Sometimes, we'd play ball too, behind Porter School. And most time we'd slip off from him because he's too little. He's head of the NAACP.

DR. CRAWFORD: (laughter) He's the little brother.

MR. HAMPTON: Now, he's the little brother. That was Bennie.

DR. CRAWFORD: And that was when you were still at Booker Washington?

MR. HAMPTON: Still at Booker Washington. Just start getting out because we were playing sand lot ball and I finished when I was seventeen years old.

DR. CRAWFORD: Because you started to school a little earlier when you were five.

MR. HAMPTON: That's it. I won the Spelling Bee when I was thirteen

in grammar school. My mama started me a year earlier. And I think that hurt me some. Might have been able to scuffle a little better later on.

DR. CRAWFORD: You won the Spelling Bee anyway though.

MR. HAMPTON: So, that's the time I started (after high school) working at Leonard's Barbecue.

DR. CRAWFORD: Was that after you finished high school?

MR. HAMPTON: Well, I was trying to go to LeMoyne College during that time. I can't blame that for me being in the fail or whatever I have been. But the thing about it, that's when I ran into the segregation again when they ...I told you about the car hops getting fired--just coincidence--they shooting dice; when we all shot dice. But they missed me, 'cause I was at school.

DR. CRAWFORD: You were at school. So, they didn't catch you. But all the car hops probably shot dice.

MR. HAMPTON: It was set-up. It was set-up to get rid of them. It was no probably to it. I think to get rid of them, you understand.

DR. CRAWFORD: That was at Leonard's on Bellevue at McLemore.

MR. HAMPTON: Uh-huh. I don't know if that would interfere with Leonard's to have to put the name in there or anything.

DR. CRAWFORD: No.

MR. HAMPTON: It's actually true. We wouldn't want to have any confrontation with him about this.

DR. CRAWFORD: Everyone knows what it was like then, I guess. Now, is the building there now? The same? Or changed?

MR. HAMPTON: It has been changed. It's a pretty building now.

But see, things have changed now because during that time there was not as much air conditioning as it is now. And you could make good money. And, I made enough money to pay my tuition at LeMoyne. And after all, the rest of the car hops got fired or worked about two weeks. My same Davis friend told me the manager was going to have to let me go because the white customers didn't agree with me hopping cars with the white boys 'cause we'd have arguments over cars...you got to get your orders out. It's a hustling job. You go in the kitchen and if you let somebody walk over you, he going to take your cars and everything. You had to hustle. But we got along. But after all, the customers were always right.

DR. CRAWFORD: You were the last colored car hop.

MR. HAMPTON: At that time. I wasn't the last car hop, but I don't think they lasted. The white car hop didn't have the humbleness that the Negro car hop does. He would go and see some of his classmates and peep in cars and things and Negroes wouldn't do those things. I use the word Negro and you see me change to colored and Negro to Black 'cause I went through all three of them.

DR. CRAWFORD: You've been through periods there.

MR. HAMPTON: Three periods. First you say colored and then you say Negro, now people say you Black. Our own people, you understand. And I been all three of them. So that is one difference.

DR. CRAWFORD: You were the last one then.

MR. HAMPTON: At that time. Since then there have been many more.

I think one of the car hops was head car hop there has worked here. (Cotton Boll)

The thing about it..the reason I left Leonard's then. After Davis told me he had played golf with the manager and he was going to have to let me go with work and everything. I got me a job at the Cotton Boll, which is the Fortune's drive-in on North Parkway.

DR. CRAWFORD: Across from Overton Park.

MR. HAMPTON: That's right.

DR. CRAWFORD: You went right from one job to another. Tell us the income from car hopping. How did it compare with the other jobs?

MR. HAMPTON: Car hopping was...you could make sometime \$15 and \$20 a night and better.

DR. CRAWFORD: My goodness. That was a lot of money then.

MR. HAMPTON: Well, you see \$18 on your Cotton Row where the fellows worked up there on Front Street, they made \$18 a week and that was good money then. And during the time, school teaching was maybe the most lucrative, respected job that colored women had at that time. And I don't think they allowed them to marry too openly. They had so many restrictions on them. But subsequently, going to school and getting off at 2 o'clock and being young and getting off with the older men, sometime I'd get home at 4 o'clock in the morning.

DR. CRAWFORD: That made it hard to get up, didn't it?

MR. HAMPTON: Hard to get up! My mother and I had two young ladies from Clarksdale going to Booker Washington. They'd wake me up at 9 o'clock--I had a 10 o'clock school at LeMoyne and they'd say, "Milton, you got to go to school." I'd say, "OK", turn over and 3:30 when the children got out of Booker Washington, I was waking up. Subsequently, I lost

so much time 'til I quit school 'cause I was losing too much time to make me enough money to go back to school and got married at the end of that.

DR. CRAWFORD: Let's go back to the Cotton Boll. But first, let me ask you about LeMoyne-Owen then. What was it like?

MR. HAMPTON: It was not LeMoyne-Owen. It was LeMoyne College and it was what you called..liberal college. It prepared you to teach in school. I don't think they had any vocational training at all during that time.

DR. CRAWFORD: It was on Walker.

MR. HAMPTON: Still on Walker, 807 Walker at McDowell right across from Metropolitan Baptist Church. Since then, many years they have been affiliated with LeMoyne-Owen. (Meant S. A. Owen Jr. College) That's the one on Vance Street down there. I think Vance and Orleans, somewhere along there. Since after Cotton Boll, getting married, that was the end of college for me.

DR. CRAWFORD: Was that **about '38?**

MR. HAMPTON: That comes to about '38. Must have been '38 because I didn't even finish as a freshman. Yes, that was about '38. But now, that was as far as what I was talking about during that time. I was just trying to say some of the things that happened to young colored boys; rode bicycles, delivered groceries, mostly drugstores and carried refreshments. Because I've ridden a bicycle for a drugstore behind Central drugstore for two cents an order. And during that time we didn't have seats on our bicycles... handle bar stand up and you sit on the side of your bar and reach up and get the Peabody car if you had a long trip and ride on out with it and when you look over....

DR. CRAWFORD: You were pulling along with the streetcar?

MR. HAMPTON: Pulling along with the streetcar. Look over to the right. If he had a passenger to pick up you just turn it loose and go on around him. And those times, police didn't bother you.

DR. CRAWFORD: They didn't mind.

MR. HAMPTON: It wasn't that many cars...traffic and I guess we'd ride for a living, you understand.

DR. CRAWFORD: You were working then and they had a lot of delivery service, a lot of stores did that, didn't they?

MR. HAMPTON: All grocery stores delivered. And sometime stores would have eight, ten boys working two cents an order.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did they pay a salary?

MR. HAMPTON: No. Two cents an order. But where you make your money, you go somewhere like 306 Cleveland, you might have twenty orders. You might have two Cokes to a certain apartment. You go in there with your bags full of Cokes, go to different apartments, you might get a tip. And two cents an order, main thing was you were working for tips. Most jobs worked for tips.

DR. CRAWFORD: That made you hustle. And even jobs such as I worked at Fortune's Jungle Garden where all them college-- (students)--to meet.

DR. CRAWFORD: Now that was after Cotton Boll?

MR. HAMPTON: That was after the Cotton Boll. But the main thing you worked at jobs like that, it would be a dollar for a night and you just buy your coat and by the time you buy your lunch, you depend on you to get your tips.

DR. CRAWFORD: Were the tips pretty good?

MR. HAMPTON: Tips were very good.

DR. CRAWFORD: You did work at the Jungle Garden after the Cotton Boll. Can you tell something while we're thinking about this period, Mr. Hampton. What streets were paved? I know you've seen some change in that. Were quite a few of the streets not paved then?

MR. HAMPTON: Well, streets were paved...I know during the time when we moved to Memphis then. When I was twenty-three, as far as Kerr Street where Father Bertrand School is over there, we called it Miles Pasture. Rabbits [were] over there and everything. That was just say, '25. So you know just how much memories have grown since then. I'm lost some places in South Memphis now.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did people hunt rabbits there?

MR. HAMPTON: Hunt rabbits and pick polk salad, some kind of greens. They had that where Bertrand is--just south of Parkway and Kerr.

DR. CRAWFORD: Now that was out in the country then?

MR. HAMPTON: Out in the country. Near there now is Forest Hills Cemetery. And during the time I was in grammar school.

They built Lincoln Park and that is out near Person Street below Kerr Street. After I was thirteen, I won the Spelling Bee, my daddy bought me a balloon tire bicycle. So, I was the only one who owned one, and Dr. Joses' son in South Memphis at that time I saw. And the Park Commissioner, the young man they would send out there to take care of the park was in charge, he'd have to pull me way out from Bellevue to the park on my bicycle. I had to meet the Glenview car every morning so he could get to work. And pull me back. So the buses didn't

run any farther than McLemore at that time. That must have been in '33. You asked me about the paved streets and things. That just shows...far they go.

DR. CRAWFORD: They didn't go very far then, did they?

MR. HAMPTON: City limits couldn't have been too far. They had just built another place not too far near Lincoln Park. They called it Bunker's Hill.

DR. CRAWFORD: Was that in the country?

MR. HAMPTON: That was almost country.

DR. CRAWFORD: At the edge of town.

MR. HAMPTON: Right at the edge of town. So this town has grown by leaps and bounds.

DR. CRAWFORD: Now, the Parkway was paved where the Cotton Boll was. It was one of the first paved streets in town, wasn't it?

MR. HAMPTON: You're talking about North Parkway. But, I'm talking about South Parkway. It was at Elvis Presley. That's where Bellevue Park was...right there at South Parkway and Bellevue.

DR. CRAWFORD: How did you get out to the Cotton Boll when you worked there?

MR. HAMPTON: My trouble by getting home so late at night. I'd have to come with some of the older men. I was a youngster, 17 or 18 years old.

DR. CRAWFORD: You'd have to wait to get a ride back.

MR. HAMPTON: When they got off, they'd stop at a certain place like the Old Plantation Club and take them a drink.

DR. CRAWFORD: Where was the Plantation Club?

MR. HAMPTON: Plantation Club was at that time on Polk Street.

 It was one of the big dance halls. Now I think they had another big dance hall called Willow Grove...what you call in the stone yard at that time. In the stone yard off Porter Street.

DR. CRAWFORD: What was it called?

MR. HAMPTON: It was the Willow Grove night club. Had a skating rink in it. Those were the entertainment spots at that time.

DR. CRAWFORD: And the men who worked at the Cotton Boll would go there after they got off?

MR. HAMPTON: No certain place to take drinks. After all, during those times the most people that spent money was the fellow that worked at the Peabody Hotel or the car hops and things. See, they had money, got off late at night and all the big places stayed up like Bessie's Chicken Shack. You could find them there because you didn't find school teachers there because they couldn't sport that way.

DR. CRAWFORD: They had to get up early in the morning.

MR. HAMPTON: And they couldn't be seen out at those places.

DR. CRAWFORD: What chicken shack was this? And where was it?

MR. HAMPTON: Bessie's Chicken Shack on Vance Street.

DR. CRAWFORD: That was a night spot too.

MR. HAMPTON: Night spot. And Davis' Grille at Vance and Fourth. All those things contributed to the night life of the South Memphis Negro at that time.

DR. CRAWFORD: Was it quite a lot of night life then?

MR. HAMPTON: Oh yes. Quite a bit. Because we haven't got to Beale Street. After I became old enough to, moved

in front of Booker Washington--that's when I learned what dice were. And some of the nice people learned how to shoot dice in Booker Washington.(laughter)

DR. CRAWFORD: I bet they learned in all schools then.

MR. HAMPTON: Oh yeah, you learned it. And some of the things that happened, some of the little cultural things we had at Booker Washington... We had a teacher named Professor Merrill. There was a hotel improvement club on Hernando Street that the high school children could go on Wednesday evening from four 'til eight and dance. Had a band. For 20¢ you could ride a cab downtown--for about 20¢ then. You talk about barbecue... Remember Johnny Mills? Johnny Mills was a barbecue stand on Fourth Street. People would come from the Peabody Hotel and different places to eat barbecue. They had a colored and white side. I used to take my girlfriend, who became my wife, and you could buy two barbecue sandwiches for, I think 35¢.

DR. CRAWFORD: Money went a long way.

MR. HAMPTON: Yeah, sure. Money went a long way and I think that's where...originating the foot-long hotdog was...the One Minute. One Minute now wasn't like the One Minute at that time.

DR. CRAWFORD: What was it like at that time?

MR. HAMPTON: Funny story to tell about the One Minute. A lot of bums would hang around there at the time. You had the Palace Theatre and they would give you a ticket for 5¢. With this ticket you could go to the Palace Theatre. That was the kids' Saturday thrill..stay all day if you wanted. Serials, things--continued westerns--trains run out from the screen at you. Next, you could get your One Minute hotdog and walk on home and that was your time. In the meantime, in the One Minute they had these chairs with a side on it. In school, they have them where you can write. Those were

dinner tables. Some of the fellas, bums I guess that hung around Beale Street, weren't living too well. They'd sit in there and they said [that] police didn't allow you to go to sleep in there. Said the guys would sit in there. You could sit in there as long as you could rock your foot. Some guys could rock the foot all night long.

DR. CRAWFORD: (laughter) They could spend the night.

MR. HAMPTON: They could spend the night. But you could make it easily on a small amount of money. And that just shows you how cheap things were then.

DR. CRAWFORD: You were making good money though at the Cotton Boll.

MR. HAMPTON: Making good money then. That was good money. That's what made the money so good--that \$18 a week at a place like cotton offices. Those were some of the best jobs in town. They sampled cotton. Those boys made \$18 a week and you had a good job during that time.

DR. CRAWFORD: That was good work.

MR. HAMPTON: That was good work during the Depression.

DR. CRAWFORD: What about Beale Street again? What was it like?

MR. HAMPTON: Before Beale Street closed up, you could go in the back of Pee Wee's and one or two places and shoot dice.

Shoot a dime and hit three licks, as they call it, went three straight times and take down 65¢. So, I being young, had done something going to "the street". But pretty soon, Commissioner Boyle, I think, came in.

DR. CRAWFORD: That was "Holy Joe" Boyle.

MR. HAMPTON: "Holy Joe" Boyle....he closed the town down.

DR. CRAWFORD: That was in the late '30's.

MR. HAMPTON: I'm not sure when that happened. Some of the older

people down there knew more about that. And that was the time when Beale Street was in "bloom". I think the maids...supposed to get off on Thursdays to come downtown, you understand. You see guys dressed up wearing high-priced shoes--Stacey Adams, all they wore--so when you gamble, you understand, you could go up to all the pawn shops up there. Pawn your stuff and go back and shoot dice. And all the pawn shops ended up with the money, anyway. 'Cause didn't but one guy win. He go get his stuff out and come back and get busted. So, it was just shifting money, you understand.

DR. CRAWFORD: They had pawn shops on Beale?

MR. HAMPTON: Pawn shops on Beale. All the way on Beale from Second to Third Street. Just along there across from A. Schwab. Now the pawn shops moved, if you notice out there on Poplar. And those the same pawn shops that was down there...Epstein and Nathan. Course, Epstein owned so much property and everything and even been fellas gambled so much and was so good with him, he could be downtown gambling somewhere...he'd send a guy up there and tell him, "Tell Mr. Epstein send me such and such thing. Tell the pawn shop broker send me such and such a thing. I'm going to bring my radio down there."

DR. CRAWFORD: And they had a regular account with him.

MR. HAMPTON: They had a regular account and you could pawn clothes. And lot of gamblers wore expensive clothes and things--watches and rings. And so, they get broke, they could go and pawn that.

DR. CRAWFORD: They could change that into money at the pawn shop.

MR. HAMPTON: That's it. And those were the kinds of conditions. But, I just don't want to harp on that was all that was happening. In the meantime, you had these things. Memphis World, Universal

Life was coming on at this time. That's why I wanted you to talk to him to get some of the educational things that was going on. And at Washington, we had Professor Merrill...ballet, we'd have Nat Williams. They'd have a ballet combined. Kind of artisitic dances and then they'd have regular jitterbur and some. And Professor Hunt would have a saying when he'd make a speech in the auditorium. He'd talk about all the nice things all the students had done. Then he'd say, "Going from the sublime to the ridiculous." He was going to talk about all the devils then. Even in the ballet, you had what you'd call the sublime and the ridiculous, because one of them's part was artistic...Professor Merrill and Nat Williams and Rufus Thomas' part was mostly jazz. They'd have all the actual things that Negroes did during those times. Poke fun at everybody else and night club scenes and some of the teachers objected to them being so risque in some of the features of the program, which had two parts. That was once a year.

DR. CRAWFORD: How late did things stay open? What time was the Cotton Boll closed, for example?

MR. HAMPTON: I think the Cotton Boll closed about 12 o'clock and, I think Beale Street would close about 12 o'clock too. But they had places you could go and buy anything you wanted.

DR. CRAWFORD: Tell us about Mr. Crump and the watermelons on Election Day.

MR. HAMPTON: Mr. Crump ran the city then. And I know I lived across the street from Booker Washington and there was Booker Washington Stadium on the railroad tracks. And Mr. Crump at election time, put a whole car of watermelons next to the fence. And everybody in the neighborhood was toting watermelons all night.

DR. CRAWFORD: That was election time.

MR. HAMPTON: Election time. And Election Day--since liquor being closed here, you didn't need to buy liquor.

DR. CRAWFORD: Because it was free.

MR. HAMPTON: Yeah, it was free.

DR. CRAWFORD: Who was passing that out? People who were working at the polls?

MR. HAMPTON: You had the different guys that run these joints--cafes and things. You know who it was connected with, who was buying the whiskey and everything.

DR. CRAWFORD: That was the Crump Machine.

MR. HAMPTON: Yeah, it was the Crump Machine and somebody could tell you more about that because I was a kid and I saw those things. I was in the watermelon bunch.

DR. CRAWFORD: (laughter) Other people were in the whiskey bunch.

MR. HAMPTON: That was a little before my day. And some of those older people could tell you mostly about those things. I hadn't gotten to the place I could get around.

DR. CRAWFORD: You were pretty young then?

MR. HAMPTON: Pretty young during that time.

DR. CRAWFORD: Now, how many watermelons would they bring out? What kind of car?

MR. HAMPTON: A coal car. A railroad coal car.

DR. CRAWFORD: A railroad car full of watermelons! That's an awful lot of watermelons!

MR. HAMPTON: Yeah, that's what I'm talking about. And during the time

as far as coal, a lot of coal cars ran up and down Frisco tracks right next to Booker Washington.

DR. CRAWFORD: And they'd pass the watermelons out there.

MR. HAMPTON: Just put the car over next to the fence. And another thing about coal and things, there were fellas who would ride the coal train and throw coal all the way off from Broadway all the way up to Elmwood Cemetery and further. Those men and youngsters would take coal and sell coal.

DR. CRAWFORD: The railroad detectives didn't like it.

MR. HAMPTON: They didn't like it. Old people would come along with a sack and pick up what was left. And if you knew how to live, you could live during those times, you understand. You didn't have to worry about standing in line to pay your light and gas bill like you do now.

DR. CRAWFORD: But they were hard times.

MR. HAMPTON: Oh, they were hard times. But nobody missed anything and people passed something over the fence to you.

DR. CRAWFORD: Do you expect people were as happy as they were then as they are now?

MR. HAMPTON: They had more fun, I believe. Had more fun.

DR. CRAWFORD: Seems like there was more night life in the city then.

MR. HAMPTON: That's one thing in my opinion different now between alcohol and this dope! No doubt, dope I say mostly contributed to crime because it costs so much to support it. Whiskey, during that time, the only thing you worried about was trying to keep from getting some corn whiskey that was bad because some fellows were making it out of anything. And it looks like the price of things contributed more to crime now.

But then that's something else. But after all, by things costing less that held down robberies and things. During the time, you could go to Beale Street and walk back home with your girl to South Memphis anytime.

DR. CRAWFORD: It was safe?

MR. HAMPTON: It was safe. Now I wouldn't walk to St. Patrick's Church back over there where I live, which is at 439 Beale.

DR. CRAWFORD: Now, you did some pool shooting when you were a pretty young man around WWII.

MR. HAMPTON: Yeah, I guess about 17. A lot of us played pool then. In fact, we played ball out there because there were no swimming pools. The only swimming pools were in North Memphis out here at Washington Park. So naturally the South Memphis boys didn't do much swimming unless you went out like where I said like Miles Pasture and swam in some old hole over there. And I was too timid and scary to do some of those kinds of things, you understand...I was a pretty nice boy, you understand. I went to Methodist Church and sang with the Baptist boys in East Trigg.

DR. CRAWFORD: In the choir.

MR. HAMPTON: I was a Methodist, but they were my partners. They were my friends. I was a Methodist. But, Beale Street. That was after high school, when you dress up whatever happen and you go to Beale Street to get out of South Memphis.

DR. CRAWFORD: And the zoot suits were...

MR. HAMPTON: During that time they called them "drapes". They call zoot suit now when your pants were say 27" in the knee and 17" in the ankle.

DR. CRAWFORD: Wide at the knee.

MR. HAMPTON: And your coat down halfway...and sometime you wear a chain. I had a, what you call, "a big apple hat". Big round thing with a feather in it. We used to play pool. And there was a stag poolroom where Elmo, I think they call it Elmo...(somebody will know his name)..we called it Elmo's.

DR. CRAWFORD: What street was that on?

MR. HAMPTON: That was on Beale Street. Next to the New Daisy.

Now you could go in Elmo's and there was a cafe downstairs, went right on down the hall and there were about eight poolrooms in the back. Meantime, Elmo's had a balcony that overlook the poolroom, so you could take your company upstairs and eat and they had good food.

DR. CRAWFORD: Pool games going on down below.

MR. HAMPTON: That's right. And no doubt, they would say some of the maids would come to town on Thursdays, you understand. The maid's day off. Those things I have heard. After all, there were a lot of maids around that time around Peabody Street. People stayed in the backyard in the servant's quarters and things. At a certain time, they brought on colored policemen and that was a new era. They brought some of my friends, intelligent, good policemen. But it is rumored that they had one policeman very brutal. He was just mean. I don't want to call his name. He's dead now. But they say he was so dumb if he'd write you up, arrest somebody on Hernando, he'd have to walk around on Fourth to write you up 'cause he couldn't spell. He was just that dumb. Politics played a big thing in who was hired on the police force.

DR. CRAWFORD: I think it did.

MR. HAMPTON: Long time like the post office, I'm afraid to go into that, but they built this system of competitive examinations and things.

DR. CRAWFORD: Civil Service?

MR. HAMPTON: Civil Service. [You] have to take those things.

I don't know how much there was civil service in hiring police at that time.

DR. CRAWFORD: I think it was mostly patronage, then.

MR. HAMPTON: I'm afraid to say it, but I'm saying this. I'm quite sure that's what it was.

DR. CRAWFORD: I think it was.

MR. HAMPTON: A lot of places still somewhere you know and a lot of times you can't get a job unless you know somebody at the place.

DR. CRAWFORD: It's still that way sometimes.

MR. HAMPTON: You still run into a whole lot of things. That was the extent...Now there are some pictures out of the first colored policemen. I think Marshall was one of them. You know his son just got into trouble. He went to the top.

DR. CRAWFORD: He got to be an inspector, I think.

MR. HAMPTON: Yes. And I had a couple friends of my own, you understand, that were policemen and I just knew when I saw them. Because during the time, I got to the place I shot dice too, and I had a friend that ran a place. And if he'd arrest everybody, I'd go down there, pay me out and I wouldn't have to go back. Just go downtown and tell the man come get everybody. If I went to jail, police saw me and said, "Ole

Milton, he just shooting dice...." you understand. No stealing.

DR. CRAWFORD: Just shooting dice.

MR. HAMPTON: During the time I was raised, my mama taught me that a man never lost grace until he steals. That was kinda out of line. But, you understand. We didn't have to do those things during that time.

DR. CRAWFORD: How were the black policemen? How did they do? Did they do a good job?

MR. HAMPTON: You had some who were nice. And then this one on Beale Street who was exceptionally cruel. He made a record of it. I don't want to talk too much about it. If I describe him, everybody will know who I'm talking about.

DR. CRAWFORD: Just don't mention his name. But tell us about him.

MR. HAMPTON: He would curse you out. I think he had been a jailer up town, you see. So, naturally when they got ready to put colored policemen on, he just came out as a colored policeman.

DR. CRAWFORD: He was a real big man.

MR. HAMPTON: He was big enough.

DR. CRAWFORD: I've heard people talk about him.

MR. HAMPTON: Call him "Shoog". Think he died after he retired trying to chase somebody as a guard in one of those supermarkets. But that was the conditions in those days.

DR. CRAWFORD: Can you tell me a little about what the Jungle Garden was like? That was on Union, wasn't it? Close to Belvedere?

MR. HAMPTON: Jungle Garden, Cotton Boll and Belvedere were mostly owned and ...but they served Fortune's ice cream. So, they were mostly named Fortune Belvedere, Fortune Cotton Boll or Fortune Jungle Garden.

DR. CRAWFORD: The same man owned all of them.

MR. HAMPTON: I think he owned all of them. After all, he had the monopoly. He had the ice cream.

DR. CRAWFORD: Because he had a dairy, I believe.

MR. HAMPTON: That's it. Which turned out later on Belvedere was sold to Midwest.

DR. CRAWFORD: There's a plant there now at the corner of Belvedere.

MR. HAMPTON: That's right. I think they have sold since then to some other company. During the time, drive-ins were popular because the college and high school's young people from Southwestern and no doubt, Memphis State could buy ice cream sodas, barbecue and they had what you call a jungle atmosphere. You could park and have fun with your girl, you understand.

DR. CRAWFORD: Have a little privacy?

MR. HAMPTON: Yeah, had a little privacy and I don't think that air-condition was that popular then. And now, everybody goes inside because it's air-conditioned in these places.

DR. CRAWFORD: But then, they'd drive up and park in their cars.

MR. HAMPTON: Park in the cars. Park in the back. And such as the Cotton Boll, they had a big back lot to it and it was dark to a certain extent.

DR. CRAWFORD: Men would like to go there on a date to park with their girl?

MR. HAMPTON: Park with their girl. And they served barbecue and get set-ups, milk shakes and sundaes and all those things in the ice cream line or whatever you wanted. And then there's one near the Belvedere, called the Pig 'N Whistle.

DR. CRAWFORD: Now that was on Union.

MR. HAMPTON: That was another on Union near the Belvedere.

DR. CRAWFORD: Now, did the same kind of people go to all of them-- college-age students or older people--go to some of them more?

MR. HAMPTON: Mostly college students. But all types of people went there. Late at night older people would come in for drinks. But it was a respected people place. And you didn't have any hoodlumism or anything like that. You might have some fights. 'Cause you'd have that anywhere.

DR. CRAWFORD: Well, I guess the car hops kept a pretty close watch so that it was safe and orderly there.

MR. HAMPTON: Yes. You had car hops in charge. People just weren't just as bad and dangerous then. You could sit out and be safe.

DR. CRAWFORD: That was a good thing about Memphis then.

MR. HAMPTON: It was. After all, people would tip you. You didn't make a salary. They'd give you a dollar a night.

But that wasn't any money. After you paid 20¢ for your coat and buy your meal..

DR. CRAWFORD: Buy your own meal. What kinds of tips would people give you, Mr. Hampton?

MR. HAMPTON: If you could just imagine that you had a slang for Coke in a glass small, you'd call shot...a tall one,

a stretch. Two shots, they was 20¢.

DR. CRAWFORD: Shot or a stretch?

MR. HAMPTON: Two shots would be a small Coke in a glass at 10¢, two of them at 20¢ and if somebody gave you 50¢, a youngster gave you a half a dollar, you'd have a 30¢ tip. It was according to what your tip was. Money wasn't inflationary then.

DR. CRAWFORD: Make about the same every year.

MR. HAMPTON: Yeah, you could get so much for your money then. Food was so cheap then. Add in the meantime, car fare was 7¢ compared to 95¢ now.

DR. CRAWFORD: That's an awful lot more.

MR. HAMPTON: That's right. Right now, I have to pay 40¢ with a card. I'm 65. So that's the type of persons went. If it's good enough for the college youngsters, no doubt many of the older age people around here know about the night life. I went to camp in '41 and they turned me down for this joint.

DR. CRAWFORD: On your finger?

MR. HAMPTON: Uh-huh. I had it operated on and cut it here where the bone broke. I don't know how I broke it, playing ball or what. See, just took that bone out.

DR. CRAWFORD: Athletes get hurt that way a lot, you know, playing ball.

MR. HAMPTON: I had hammer toes from wearing those pretty sharp toe shoes, you know. Put your foot out [like that] and the doctor tell you to relax and it curl back up.

DR. CRAWFORD: Shoes were real pointed then, weren't they?

MR. HAMPTON: Cuban heels shoes and things like that.

DR. CRAWFORD: Dressing up was something people enjoyed back then, wasn't it?

MR. HAMPTON: Everybody didn't buy big pretty automobiles then. Main thing was they'd dress up and take their girl to a dance.

DR. CRAWFORD: Spend the money on clothes and have a good time.

MR. HAMPTON: Good time. You catch a good band come to town, it wouldn't be over a dollar--a dollar sixty-five cents. Chick Webb was something like that.

DR. CRAWFORD: Where were the good bands playing mostly?

MR. HAMPTON: In Church Park or the Orpheum Theatre. The Orpheum being the Malco and they named it the Orpheum again. And you could dance at Church Park. But there was always the hotel improvement club and things like the Elks Club...night life.

DR. CRAWFORD: It seems like there was a lot to do in Memphis then.

MR. HAMPTON: There was a lot to do. You didn't have to have a million dollars.

DR. CRAWFORD: And people used cars a lot then, didn't they?

MR. HAMPTON: No. They didn't have cars. Like I told you, you could ride a cab for 20¢ from maybe, Booker Washington to Beale Street. And things like that were in reach. A lunch out of the One Minute...you get a ham sandwich and you'd have a delicacy 'cause it was so big.

DR. CRAWFORD: Kind of a meal.

MR. HAMPTON: Yes. See a lot of fellas, they hustle downtown,

play pool. They send and get a ham sandwich, a rootbeer...they could make it. I know the time, next to Booker Washington where I moved in front of it, they had a Guettler's bakery. Get a loaf of raisin bread for a nickle.

DR. CRAWFORD: What bakery was that?

MR. HAMPTON: They call it Guettler's. Next to Booker Washington
 at the time. It was about '33. You see you ride the
streetcar for seven cents. You could walk up there and save your seven cents,
buy your bread and you'd have your girl to walk home with. All the way to
Parkway!

DR. CRAWFORD: I guess anytime you had a loaf of raisin bread, you
 had a girl to walk home with.

MR. HAMPTON: (laughter) Now you got to have a big car.

DR. CRAWFORD: And Memphis was really safe then. Crime wasn't bad.

MR. HAMPTON: No crime.

DR. CRAWFORD: Why was that, do you think?

MR. HAMPTON: Everybody helped each other. Food prices were cheap.
 I guess whiskey was cheap. Dope wasn't high. I've
heard fellas talking about it being \$300 to \$400 a day for dope and stuff.
It takes some money to support a habit like that. Me and my wife have gone
to a dance with half a pint and come back with half of it, you understand.
For some reason, the longer you drink the more you drink or something. What-
ever it is about those things. Well, having a good time didn't cost a whole
lot. You could imagine going to a dance for 20¢ in high school and just 40¢
for you and your girl, and 35¢ you had barbecue. Walk to Beale Street and back.
DR. CRAWFORD: You'd walk a lot of places then.
MR. HAMPTON: Walk anywhere.

DR. CRAWFORD: Why do you suppose crime is worse now?

MR. HAMPTON: I don't know. Some people put it on television.

People learning more tricks and things. People traveling, learning how to do different things in different places. Come back to Memphis with them. Crime we used to didn't know about--smoking weed--then until people traveled to Chicago I guess.

DR. CRAWFORD: And there wasn't much stealing then, was there?

MR. HAMPTON: That was the shame. Like I tell you, like Mama used to tell me, "Man never lose grace 'til he steals." Now, man stealing and get away with it--get away with it--he's the greatest cat in the world. Holding you up and hitting you in the head and those kind of things.

DR. CRAWFORD: Wasn't much of that, was there?

MR. HAMPTON: Like I say, you had some young Negroes as we're concerned. If either one of us in the bunch had some money, we all had some money.

DR. CRAWFORD: Helped one another.

MR. HAMPTON: Helped one another! If you could play pool or something like that, you could give your buddy. He got somebody he could beat, he'd come along. A lot of time, guys would work couldn't play good as the guys that didn't work. They'd come along. They gonna spend some money every Saturday. You got your man. Your buddy's gonna give you some money to play him. A guy would stake you. All those kind of things.

DR. CRAWFORD: People had ways of getting along, didn't they?

MR. HAMPTON: And then, somebody would cook something and hand it

over the fence to the neighbors. People don't do that now. I live up there in an apartment house. I know people cooking different things. We don't give up anything. Don't even associate with one another.

DR. CRAWFORD: And people raised gardens then, didn't they?

MR. HAMPTON: Raised gardens and everything. You can't even raise a garden now. Somebody gonna steal it at night.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did people have chickens in town then?

MR. HAMPTON: Had chickens. The main thing. They tell the joke but it's actually the truth. You didn't have rent trouble because all the houses was wood. If you owed your rent money in places where the people couldn't pay the rent, the rent man let them stay there because the neighbors were going to burn it up for wood!

DR. CRAWFORD: (laughter) That may be a joke. But there might be some truth to it.

MR. HAMPTON: (laughter) It's actually true. Ain't no way a man gonna set you out for when the neighbors are going to burn your house down by reaching up and tear the planks up. Right now they turn your gas off. In fact, everybody needs a house now.

DR. CRAWFORD: How as the politics in the city then? I guess people didn't think about it a lot.

MR. HAMPTON: Politics was like I'm telling you with Mr. Crump running the city.

DR. CRAWFORD: How did he run the city?

MR. HAMPTON: He ran the city just like I was saying. There was segregation and people were appointed to things. And

school teachers were...Professor Hunt was head of Booker Washington, but teachers had to cower down to city rules and **the** politics and things. It was a machine deal then. That's why Hunt...called him "Benevolent Dictator." He was good. Did things for you. But then you get out of a lot of trouble because of politicians. I think just before my time, they had policy runners.

DR. CRAWFORD: Policy runners. I've heard a little about that.

How did that work? That was really before your time.

MR. HAMPTON: I don't know about it, but I know it happened when I was in grammar school. See, you have certain men come out and get your numbers for a dime or twenty cents. It originated in Harlem. And downtown, if they pulled the balls and your number come out, you win--\$10 or \$5 for a penny.

DR. CRAWFORD: Oh yes. Kinda like a lottery.

MR. HAMPTON: That's all it was, a lottery. When they outlawed those things, they outlawed prostitution.

DR. CRAWFORD: When did they do that? Before the end of WWII, was it?

MR. HAMPTON: Mr. Crump..No, they put it on Mr. Boyle. What you call him, "Holy Joe" Boyle? Seems like the Christian element has taken on the city now. Everything they try to do now is run by the Christian element. Everybody talks about everybody taking money to West Memphis. Build it up in West Memphis and tax the people over here. They say you can't do anything over here. I don't know if it hurts Memphis.

DR. CRAWFORD: Pay a whole lot of taxes.

MR. HAMPTON: Takes a whole lot of money to West Memphis to that race track that could be spent here.

DR. CRAWFORD: Yes. A lot of people go across the river..a lot of it goes to the races.

MR. HAMPTON: Had a lot of people who lost their homes and everything. That's a big thing.

DR. CRAWFORD: The money goes across the river.

MR. HAMPTON: Yeah. Building their highway and when we want something, we have to dig down and our property taxes going up and everything.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did the town change much when Commissioner Boyle came in?

MR. HAMPTON: It changed considerably as far as people having to go to work for a living. I don't know if he cracked down on corn whiskey so much that people started bootlegging it. Bootleg now. Bootleg sealed whiskey. So the Federal government doesn't bother you because the tax is paid on it.

DR. CRAWFORD: As long as taxes are paid.

MR. HAMPTON: The federal government doesn't bother you. And I don't see the police ever raid a bootlegger now. You can buy as much whiskey on Sunday as you can up through the week.

DR. CRAWFORD: You know, I haven't heard anything about them raiding bootleggers in a long time.

MR. HAMPTON: No. You don't hear about nobody raiding a bootlegger.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did they used to do it a lot?

MR. HAMPTON: Yeah. Used to raid them and look for corn whiskey.

DR. CRAWFORD: Where would they catch them? In town or out of town?

MR. HAMPTON: Try to catch it in your house. That's the thing about

it. You had to pay the police.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did the police not bother people much if they would pay?

MR. HAMPTON: They didn't bother you much if you would pay. Have certain policemen...and the whole thing was crooked politics, you understand. I have known even as far as Chattanooga, Tennessee. My daddy has told me, "If one of the fellas in Chattanooga made it to the river and got his whiskey, he was saved when he came back." 'Cause the people in Chattanooga...you could put a vendor in your house and let your wife sell liquor all day and a lot of fellas in Chattanooga...I went there when I was about 21 years old and all they wore was Tom Cat overalls and pretty shirts and things and walk the streets and play, what they call "Georgia Skin." Didn't need to work. Just dodge that man in the morning and get your whiskey.

DR. CRAWFORD: Uh-huh. Bring it in?

MR. HAMPTON: Dodge that federal man and they were telling me about some fella named Dick. He and his wife was barbecuing and he'd have to heat it up quick 'cause the police come by and say, "Hey Dick, give me some of that barbecue." And they'd take anything they want, you understand.

DR. CRAWFORD: Yeah!

MR. HAMPTON: But meantime, you could have a vendor there. People get off from work. Liquor sell for 10¢ a shot, 15¢ a shot, half a pint for a half a dollar. That's the reason people could make it. Right now, they just went up on the liquor the other day.

DR. CRAWFORD: Yeah, the first of October. Taxes went up again.

MR. HAMPTON: Two dollars a gallon! So, I guess people still gonna buy it. I don't care, get addicted to it.. something, you gonna get the money for it. You get the money for dope.

DR. CRAWFORD: I've found it really doesn't matter what things cost. If people want it, you know, they're going to tet the money some way and they're going to live about the way they usually do it, seems like.

MR. HAMPTON: I don't know, seems like it's hypocritical in what I think, but the people don't drink, live off the ones that do drink, 'cause [they live off] of the tax.

DR. CRAWFORD: They pay the taxes!

MR. HAMPTON: They pay the taxes. (laughter)

DR. CRAWFORD: They pay a lot of taxes.

MR. HAMPTON: They do. (laughter) I just didn't want to bring up anything funny. But, he and I just got through talking about funny things happened. And, you know I've trusted him with some things I don't usually tell everybody, you understand. But, everybody doesn't understand....

DR. CRAWFORD: Unless they know what things were like.

MR. HAMPTON: You don't understand, this is another story about shooting dice. We used to have a big crap game behind the school. People start your crap game. You got a quarter, they start and a lot of people shoot a nickle. You don't get but 15¢ down. That's where he gets his money.

DR. CRAWFORD: Because he's fronting the game.

MR. HAMPTON: Fronting the game. But now, he can't protect it 'cause

when the police come, you have to run. But then, the police didn't cost you but \$2. Take you up town and pay two dollars.

DR. CRAWFORD: That was not a lot.

MR. HAMPTON: You could cut your two dollars off in five minutes off your game if you get the game going good. Anyhow, I always tell a lie 'cause we'd lie on each other, we did. You know boys lie and talk about how fast each other run, you understand. 'Cause police would have to try and catch you and they couldn't run down those alleys as fast as we [did]. The bunch did know the alleys and things.

DR. CRAWFORD: You'd know the way out of there.....

MR. HAMPTON: (laughter) Yeah, cut through somebody's yard. But, they tell one story that I was just telling a story about a couple of boys, one of my classmates. In the neighborhood, they'd shoot behind Booker Washington under the stadium, you understand. But police came over there. And the railroad track where they threw the watermelons I told you about. Well, during the time, they had these men switchmen at the crossing to let the gate down.

DR. CRAWFORD: Yes. That was back when they didn't have machinery to do that.

MR. HAMPTON: Yeah. So, they say that Bert...I called his name but I didn't intend to do it. But anyway, they hired some college athletes--I don't know whether from Memphis State or Southwestern--to come out there and catch the crap-shooters, you understand.

DR. CRAWFORD: (laughter) Police couldn't get them. They had to get someone who could run fast....

MR. HAMPTON: (laughter) One of the fellas, I called his name,

say he took a policeman out by the cemetery, out down the railroad tracks so fast when he got down to Neptune...say when the man let the gate down, he thought it was a train coming!

DR. CRAWFORD: (laughter) Well, there are some funny stories to that.

MR. HAMPTON: Well, those are things that actually happened. After all, that same fella that shot dice for the extra money were the same fellas that didn't hold you up.

DR. CRAWFORD: Well, that was sure better than crime.

MR. HAMPTON: Sure was. Whole lot better.

DR. CRAWFORD: Things were a whole lot safer, it seems like. I guess people could walk the streets at night and leave their doors unlocked.

MR. HAMPTON: Well, sure. Didn't have more than a screen. People be out there smoking mosquitoes and things like that.

DR. CRAWFORD: Smudge pot?

MR. HAMPTON: Smudge pot.

DR. CRAWFORD: Sitting on the porch because it wasn't air-conditioned.

MR. HAMPTON: Yeah. Had to sleep on your porch.

DR. CRAWFORD: Was it safe to do that?

MR. HAMPTON: Sure, it was safe to that then. We're afraid up there where we stay now. The women are asking for enough night guards on. To go in an apartment like that you got to have a card.

DR. CRAWFORD: Supposed to be safer that way. Well, you have really seen things change in half a century in this city, haven't you?

MR. HAMPTON: Yeah. That's the thing about it. Like I told you about it. I ran from being the colored man, to the Negro and black. Now I say something to one of these young Negroes today and say something about being a Negro, he'd get mad. Want you to use the word black.

DR. CRAWFORD: Well, you kind of have to remember what people liked to be called.

MR. HAMPTON: And I just tell him, "Ya'll think you're bad. You do a whole lot of things you don't do now 'cause we had to wait...go to the back...Wait, I didn't tell you about this. At Booker Washington, that's where Hunt was. We called Hunt "Crumpton". What I call him, "Benevolent Dictator"? We had trouble on white standing up and Negroes having to go to the back and sit in the back. Well, sometimes some of the white fellas would sit back in the middle of the car and here Negroes standing up in the back. Get 'round over by Booker Washington and all that was predominately Negro neighborhood. They didn't want that junk...some white man getting on there sitting in front of him and things like that. And they'd have little skirmishes, especially with the school children getting into it. Take one of them, "Here come a honkie." So, it got to the place that that's when they brought the law out then...whites sit from the front to the back and the colored from the back to the front. Well, that was a solution then. But now, they are not sitting...Like this woman down in Montgomery where Martin Luther King started?

DR. CRAWFORD: Yeah. That started a big change.

MR. HAMPTON: Those kinds of things, I think some of the youngsters couldn't live in those days. They don't think. They

couldn't live in those days. 'Cause you could get killed.

DR. CRAWFORD: Well, it's better in some ways.

MR. HAMPTON: When decent people get on the car...like I don't want a dirty white man sitting beside me. Now a Negro man doesn't have to be dirty. He's got showers where he works. He can clean up. If he's filthy, [he] ain't got no business riding with nobody. Made us better to associate.

DR. CRAWFORD: I think a lot of it has been better. The city is just not as safe as it used to be. But, it's sure more fair to people.

MR. HAMPTON: Then after all, you get your education. Get exposed to education. Time you didn't have too many vocational schools to go to.

DR. CRAWFORD: Sure is better in education. You know we've got white and black students and one does as well as the other now. They get out and become doctors, lawyers, businessmen, whatever they want to.

MR. HAMPTON: Just a matter of being factual about things. Right now today, at my age what I can't do..I don't feel as comfortable ^{with} a white man as the ^{young} black man today does, the youngster calls himself black. 'Cause I been raised when I had to wait to the last one to get on a bus. Had to stand and wait until a white man get on. Go to the back.

DR. CRAWFORD: You've seen things they haven't seen.

MR. HAMPTON: I seen it during the war. They were teaching out here at Manassas High School....riveting. I went out there to take riveting to get myself a job. We was living at Third & Virginia and

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the #11 bus came through that neighborhood after coming through a white neighborhood. We had to catch the #11 and I was working at Memphis Furniture Factory. I had a wife. Get off work and ride all the way cross town and take riveting at night at Manassas High School. One night we got on the #11 in our neighborhood and two white fellas sat in the back and white ladies up there. Now here Negroes standing back there. Me being twenty some years old and this other fellow, a youngster say, "Man, sit back." They wouldn't move, so we sat in front of them. One of the white women said, "I'd never known the day a Nigger would sit in front of a white man."

DR. CRAWFORD: Things had started changing even then, didn't they?

MR. HAMPTON: Well, they didn't change for us then. 'Cause we rode in then. The next night we came back to school, there's the police sitting on there with a baseball bat!

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